CONN. PANTHER TRIAL STARTED

Murder Charged; Crowd Stages March

By DAN HALL

NEW HAVEN, Conn. (AP) — Testimony began Tuesday in the trial of one of eight Black Panthers charged in the slaying of another party member as a crowd of sympathizers demonstrated outside the courthouse.

The defendant, 24-year-old Lonnie McLucas of New Haven, listened without visible reaction as policemen and firemen testified about the discovery of the victim's body.

McLucas is charged with kidnaping resulting in death in the slaying of Alex Rackley of New York City, who police claim was suspected of being an informer by party members. Others scheduled to stand trial later include Bobby G. Seale, a co-founder and national chairman of the party.

PROTEST QUIET

The demonstrators—mostly white—gathered peacefully on the New Haven Green across the street from the courthouse, and chanted "free the Panthers" and "power to the people." The demonstration was not audible in the courtroom.

McLucas arrived at the courthouse under heavy guard. He has been held at the state correctional center in Litchfield, 40 miles away, since his extradition to Connecticut from Utah last year.

Among those who testified was State Policeman George J. Heg. He told the jury of 12—nine whites and three blacks—that among the articles authorities turned over to the FBI after Rackley's body was found were "wire that was found around the victim's neck," adhesive tape from both wrists, material from two bullet wounds and fibers resembling clothesline from the victim's neck. The body was pulled from a river in rural Middlefield on May 21, 1969.

ROPE FOUND

Heg said some clothesline rope was found under the body, partly submerged in the Coghinchaug River.

Police have claimed Rackley was brought to New Haven from New York City, tortured in an effort to make him confess he was an informer, and was bound and taken to Middlefield to be shot.

His body bore bullet wounds in the head and chest.

The Panther Party has maintained that Rackley was a member in good standing. Some Panther spokesmen have charged that Rackley was killed by "police agents."